Leasing of lignite/coal blocks

2793. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons due to which Government propose to change the present policy for leasing of lignite/coal block;

(b) the reasons due to which Government propose to deprive the rights of the State Government contained in Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 to utilize their mineral resources as per their priorities; and

(c) whether Government would agree to give 75 per cent Production Link Payment to State Government if bidding process is applied?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) Ministry of Coal has informed that with the increase in demand for coal and limited number of coal blocks available for allocation, there is need to bring about transparency and objectivity in the process of selection of applicants for such blocks.

(b) State Governments are the owners of the minerals and grant mineral concession. Prior approval of the Central Government is required in respect of minerals in First Schedule to the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957. As per available information, there is no proposal to deprive the rights of State Government to grant mineral concessions.

(c) Ministry of Coal has not taken any decision in the matter.

Study for protection from earthquake

†2794. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have conducted any study for protection of lives and property in urban and rural areas in view of the situation prevailed after the devastating earthquake in the country particularly in Gujarat;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.